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## THE SYMBOLIC CONSUMPTION OF CULTURAL QUARTERS

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Cultural tourism destinations, such as cultural quarters, have become an important part of postmodern society because tourists are more interested in cultural tourism than they have been in the past. The purpose of this research is to examine tourists' cultural quarters revisit or recommendation intentions. Building on self-congruity theory, this research incorporates a "cultural contact" variable into symbolic consumption in the tourism destination brands model to examine tourists' cultural quarters revisit or recommendation intentions. In total, 400 Taiwanese tourists were recruited. This study used structural equation modeling (SEM) to examine the proposed model. The results demonstrate that ideal self-congruence, brand identification, lifestyle congruence, and cultural contact influence tourists' satisfaction, which in turn affects their behavioral intentions. In addition, cultural contact positively moderates the relationship between satisfaction and intentions. The theoretical and managerial implications of this study are discussed in the context of the cultural tourism literature.

**Key words:** Cultural quarters; Cultural contact; Symbolic consumption; Self-congruity theory

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### Introduction

Among a range of different cultural goods, cultural quarters are significant because they provide opportunities to foster cultural diversity and creativity and can increase the vibrancy of local economies (A. Chen, Peng, & Hung, 2015; McCarthy, 2006; O'Connor & Wynne, 1998; Throsby, 2008; Wansborough & Mageean, 2000). Cultural quarters are defined as distinct and spatially limited areas that contain a greater number of cultural activities

and facilities than other areas (Wansborough & Mageean, 2000). In addition to these benefits, cultural quarters have the potential to become popular tourism destinations because tourists are currently more interested in cultural tourism and its associated activities than they have been in the past (Gnoth & Zins, 2013).

Scholars and practitioners have studied cultural quarters from different perspectives since the late 1990s (A. Chen et al., 2015; Jayne, 2004; McCarthy, 2006; Pappalepore, Maitland, & Smith, 2014;

Porter & Barber, 2007). However, there are gaps in the current tourism literature that can be narrowed by studying cultural quarters from the tourist's perspective. Existing findings regarding the influence of symbolic consumption variables on tourists have been inconsistent. In addition, the question of how contact with on-site activities can affect tourists' experiences and behaviors can be further explored.

First, scholars have suggested that self-congruity theory can provide useful insights into the relationship between a tourism destination and its visitors because, when applied to the consumption context, this theory proposes that individuals will be more likely to consume products that help them enhance their self-image (Hosany & Martin, 2012). However, more attention could be focused on investigating the different dimensions of congruity that contribute to consumers' experiences when they visit cultural quarters. Such research is relevant because self-congruity represents one aspect of congruity.

Research on the different dimensions of congruity may be particularly welcomed by academic communities when the product offering represents an intangible emotional experience of high symbolic value, as occurs in tourism. Tourism activities represent certain lifestyles and involve participants who strongly affiliate themselves with specific brands. Researchers have suggested that the influence of tourists' identification with a brand community and the degree of congruence between tourists' lifestyles and the lifestyle represented by the destination should be considered together with self-congruity (Ahn, Ekinci, & Li, 2013; Hosany & Martin, 2012).

The symbolic consumption in the tourism destination brands model can be a useful model when examining tourists' behavior because this framework takes the concepts of ideal self-congruity, lifestyle congruity, and brand identification into account (Ekinci, Sirakaya-Turk, & Preciado, 2013). However, the findings regarding the influence of symbolic consumption variables on tourists have been inconsistent. This model's contribution to self-congruity theory is limited because of these inconsistencies.

Second, Kim and Ritchie (2014) noted that there are two phases in a tourist visit to a destination: planning and on-site activities. Previously, researchers tended to focus more on the former than

the latter. However, Kim and Ritchie (2014) found that immersion in on-site activities could have a profound impact on tourists' experiences. Certain tourism destinations, such as cultural quarters, are characterized by high levels of activity. Therefore, researchers have suggested that the influence of on-site activities should be considered when examining tourists' symbolic consumption of tourism destination brands and tourism activities (Choi, Papandrea, & Bennett, 2007; J. Lee, Graefe, & Burns, 2007; T. H. Lee & Chang, 2012). Scholars have also suggested that more can be done to investigate how contact with on-site activities can affect tourists' experiences and behaviors (Bonn, Joseph-Mathews, Dai, Hayes, & Cave, 2007; McCarthy, 2006; Pappalepore et al., 2014; Porter & Barber, 2007).

To close the research gaps in the current tourism literature, tourists' consumption of tourism destinations characterized by high levels of on-site activities is examined by incorporating a "cultural contact" variable into symbolic consumption in the tourism destination brands model. Specifically, through this research, we make three contributions to the literature. First, based on the result, we confirm that contact with cultural activities affects tourists' satisfaction and behavioral intentions to revisit or recommend a cultural quarter. Second, we find that contact with cultural activities can moderate the influence of satisfaction on tourists' behavioral intentions. Third, our findings support the contention that ideal self-congruence, brand identification, and lifestyle congruence can influence tourists' satisfaction with cultural quarters.

## Literature Review

### *Self-Congruity Theory and the Symbolic Consumption of Tourism Destination Brands*

In this study, we adopt self-congruity theory as the overarching theory. Self-congruity can be defined as the cognitive match between an individual's self-concept/self-image and a product or brand's image. One aspect of self-congruity theory is that consumers prefer brands and products that sustain or enhance their self-image or self-concept (Hosany & Martin, 2012). Furthermore, researchers have proposed that consumers' behavioral intentions are affected by the degree of matching between

a product's/brand's attributes and consumers' self-concept (Usakli & Baloglu, 2011). The greater the degree of congruence is, the higher the probability of intention to purchase will be.

Researchers have confirmed that self-congruence plays an important role in influencing tourists' behavioral intentions and actual behaviors because tourists use the distinctive images of tourism destinations to enrich or sustain their self-image (Hosany & Martin, 2012). However, in the context of tourism destinations, the importance of lifestyle congruence and brand identification cannot be overlooked (Ekinci et al., 2013). To take these factors into account, in this study we adopt symbolic consumption in the tourism destination brands model as the central research framework.

The concept of symbolic consumption was introduced to the tourism destination brands model to examine tourists' consumption of a destination's symbolic meanings (Ahn et al., 2013; Ekinci et al., 2013; Hosany & Martin, 2012). In this model, ideal self-congruence, brand identification, and lifestyle congruence can affect tourists' satisfaction, which in turn can affect tourists' behavioral intentions. Ekinci et al. (2013) suggested that ideal self-congruence, brand identification, and lifestyle congruence are important determinants of tourists' consumption of destinations because tourists visit places to sustain or enhance tourists' self-image, they define their social identity using tourism brands or by associating themselves with brands, and they engage in repeat visits or buying behavior when tourism products satisfy their need to maintain or achieve a particular lifestyle (Ahn et al., 2013). For example, Ekinci et al. (2013) found tourists visit Antalya because this destination enhances their desired self-image (e.g., somewhat wealthy) and matches their lifestyle (e.g., prefer sun and beach). Additionally, Antalya is a tourism destination brand that they can identify with (e.g., association with the French Riviera).

In the context of this research, ideal self-congruence is the degree to which a cultural quarter's image matches a tourist's ideal self-image (Hosany & Martin, 2012). Lifestyle congruence is defined as the degree of alignment between a cultural quarter's perceived lifestyle and a tourist's lifestyle (A. Chen et al., 2015). Finally, in this research, we define brand identification as the degree to which tourists can define their social identity by using and

associating themselves with a cultural quarter's brand (Tuškej, Golob, & Podnar, 2013). In Ekinci, Dawes, and Massey's (2008) and Hosany and Martin's (2012) research on service-based products, these authors confirm that ideal self-congruence is more aspirational than actual self-congruence: They find that actual self-congruence has no impact on customer satisfaction. Based on these results, we only focus on the ideal self-congruence aspect of self-congruence theory in this research.

#### *Cultural Contact as a Form of On-Site Activity Involvement*

To account for the influence of cultural activities on tourists, we incorporate "cultural contact" into symbolic consumption in the tourism destination brands model in the present study. In this research, we define cultural contact as the degree to which a tourist becomes involved in cultural activities when visiting a cultural quarter (Gnoth & Zins, 2013; T. H. Lee & Chang, 2012). Involvement has had increasingly greater relevance in studies of tourists because it has considerable influence on the consumption decision process (T. H. Lee & Chang, 2012; L. Lu, Chi, & Liu, 2015; Martin, Collado, & Bosque, 2013; Prayag & Ryan, 2012; Wong & Tang, 2016). Involvement in the on-site phase corresponds to how tourists engage when participating in tourism activities (Martin et al., 2013). On-site activity involvement is a psychographic construct that may be critical as a direct antecedent of consumers' satisfaction (T. H. Lee & Chang, 2012; L. Lu et al., 2015). Gnoth and Zins (2013) developed a unidimensional cultural contact scale to measure the level of on-site involvement of 250 tourists after they engaged with the Maori culture. These authors examined the relationship between cultural contact and tourists' motivation, but they noted that additional investigation into the influence of this factor is still needed.

#### *Research Framework and Hypotheses*

##### *Symbolic Consumption Variables, Tourists' Satisfaction, and Behavioral Intentions*

Pursuant to the literature reviewed above and the described research goals, we propose a research framework for the study (Fig. 1). The first hypothesis

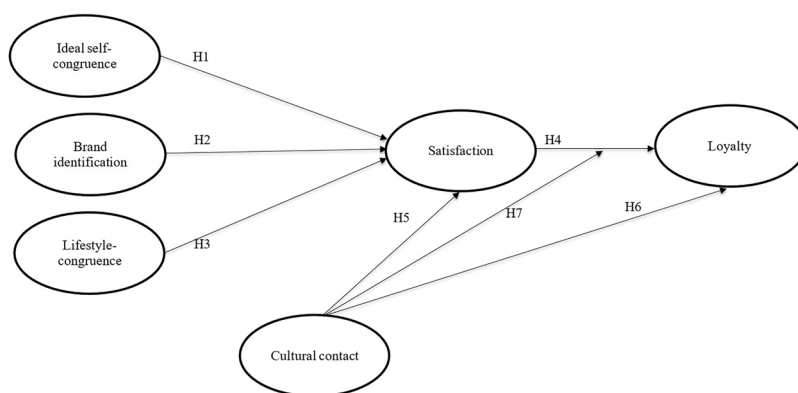


Figure 1. Research framework ( $N=400$ ).

to be examined concerns the relationship between ideal self-congruence and satisfaction. Consumers often intend to purchase products and brands that are aligned with or can enhance their self-image (Usakli & Baloglu, 2011). In studies, satisfaction is shown to be positively affected by self-congruity (Hosany & Martin, 2012). Ideal self-congruence and satisfaction have been examined and their effects confirmed in tourism contexts. Tourists use tourism products, such as destinations, to sustain and enhance their ideal self-image (Han & Back, 2008; Hosany & Martin, 2012). In this study, satisfaction is defined as tourists' overall affective appraisal of the cultural quarter that they visited (Dagger & David, 2012). This relationship may be particularly relevant within the context of a cultural destination because such destinations often have distinct images. Tourists can use cultural quarters and their associated symbolic meanings to sustain and enhance their self-image (A. Chen et al., 2015; Ekinci et al., 2013). We propose that tourists will be more likely to be satisfied with their decision to visit if a cultural quarter's image is consistent with how they want to be perceived by themselves or by others (H1).

**H1:** Ideal self-congruence has a positive effect on tourists' cultural-quarter satisfaction.

The second hypothesis to be examined concerns the relationship between brand identification and tourists' cultural quarter satisfaction. Consumers purchase certain brands to demonstrate their

identification with a brand and to join the brand's community (He, Li, & Harris, 2012; Heere, Walker, Yoshida, Ko, & James, 2011; Tuškej et al., 2013; White, Argo, & Sengupta, 2012). It is suggested in the tourism literature that individuals identify with brands that help them to build a good reputation within their existing social groups or those they aspire to join (A. Chen et al., 2015; Ekinci et al., 2013; Peng & Chen, 2011). Cultural quarters often have distinctive brand identities and communities of visitors (McCarthy, 2006; Montgomery, 2003). Tourists will be more pleased with their visit if they can identify with the destination brand, such as by sharing the same faith or religious values. Nam, Ekinci, and Whyatt (2011) confirm that tourists are more likely to be satisfied with their decision to visit a destination when they identify with its brand. The current research proposes that tourists who strongly identify with a cultural quarter's brand will be satisfied with their visit (H2).

**H2:** Brand identification has a positive effect on tourists' cultural quarter satisfaction.

Third, we hypothesize that lifestyle congruence can positively affect tourists' cultural quarter satisfaction. The consumer behavior literature suggests that consumers tend to prefer products and brands that are in line with their current or aspirational lifestyle (Ping, Lobo, & Li, 2012). In tourism research, scholars also confirm that lifestyle congruence can affect tourists' evaluations of and commitment to destinations (A. Chen et al., 2015;

Ekinici et al., 2013). Tourists prefer to visit destinations that reflect or agree with their lifestyles. They also revisit such destinations or recommend them to their friends. Cultural quarters reflect and promote certain lifestyles (Jayne, 2004). Additionally, Montgomery (2003) suggests that one appeal of cultural quarters is that they reflect a unique lifestyle. The current research proposes that tourists will be more likely to be pleased with their visit if the lifestyle that is reflected by a cultural quarter is consistent with their lifestyle (H3).

**H3:** Lifestyle congruence has a positive effect on tourists' cultural quarter satisfaction.

The fourth hypothesis that we examine in this study concerns the influence of satisfaction on tourists' intentions to recommend and revisit a cultural quarter. In the context of this research, we define behavioral intention as the desire to attempt to revisit and/or to recommend a cultural quarter (Ajzen, 1991). The influence of satisfaction on behavioral intentions has been examined by scholars who study tourist behavior (Wan & Chan, 2013). Based on Um, Chon, and Ro's (2006) and Wan and Chan's (2013) findings, we propose that tourists who are satisfied with their cultural quarter visit will be more likely to revisit. In addition, they will utilize positive word of mouth and make recommendations to others. Thus, the following hypothesis (H4) will be tested:

**H4:** Satisfaction has a positive effect on tourists' behavioral intentions, as measured by intentions to revisit and to recommend a cultural quarter to others.

#### *The Influence of Cultural Contact*

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this research is that we include the cultural contact variable within symbolic consumption in the tourism destination brands model. Given the scarcity of studies on cultural contact's effects, we also considered the literature on involvement when developing hypotheses regarding the effects of cultural contact because cultural contact measures tourists' involvement levels in cultural activities while on-site. The fifth hypothesis that we examine in this

research concerns cultural contact's effect on tourists' satisfaction with cultural quarters. In T. H. Lee and Chang's (2012) study on wine tourism, the authors confirmed that tourists' active involvement, such as being given an opportunity to taste wine, positively affects their satisfaction with the tour. In the context of tourism research, the general consensus is that tourists will be more satisfied with their visit if there are more activities at the destination/attraction that allow them to be involved (T. H. Lee & Chang, 2012; L. Lu et al., 2015; Prayag & Ryan, 2012).

At some cultural destinations, visitors can personally participate in the offered activities. However, whether their visitation experiences are enhanced by these cultural activities remains less studied, even though such activities can often be costly to the organizers. Based on research by T. H. Lee and Chang (2012), in this study we contribute to the literature by proposing that tourists' cultural quarter satisfaction will be higher if they have more contact with cultural activities (H5).

**H5:** Cultural contact has a positive effect on tourists' cultural quarter satisfaction.

The sixth hypothesis that we examine in this study concerns cultural contact's effect on tourists' behavioral intentions. Tourism scholars have confirmed that involvement can also affect tourists' behavioral intentions (Hochgraeffe, Faulk, & Vieregge, 2012; T. H. Lee & Chang, 2012; Martin et al., 2013; Wong & Tang, 2016). In the case of nature-based tourism, visitors are more likely to have higher intentions to revisit and intentions to recommend a forest if they have plenty of opportunities to participate in the activities provided by the forest managers (J. Lee et al., 2007). Cultural quarters contain a high number of cultural activities that tourists can engage in (Wansborough & Mageean, 2000). Nevertheless, whether these activities can contribute to the long-term success of cultural quarters in the form of inspiring tourists to revisit and to recommend the destination to others remains understudied. Based on the results of previous studies (Hochgraeffe et al., 2012; T. H. Lee & Chang, 2012; Martin et al., 2013; Wong & Tang, 2016), this study proposes that tourists' intentions to revisit and recommend will be higher if they have more



opportunities for contact and involvement in activities when they visit cultural quarters (H6).

**H6:** Cultural contact has a positive effect on tourists' behavioral intentions.

The seventh hypothesis to be examined by this research concerns cultural contact's ability to moderate satisfaction's influence on tourists' behavioral intentions. We will examine this hypothesis after confirming cultural contact's direct influences on satisfaction (H6) and behavioral intentions (H7). The tourism literature has yet to empirically examine cultural contact's moderating effect on this relationship, although researchers have confirmed that consumers' satisfaction will have a greater effect on their behavioral intentions if they are highly involved in the activities that they participate in or the products that they purchase (Dagger & David, 2012). Dagger and David (2012) hypothesize and confirm that highly involved consumers tend to care more about the products that they purchase than less involved consumers; therefore, highly involved consumers will give greater weight to satisfaction when deciding whether they should repurchase or not. Although Dagger and David's (2012) focus was on the long-term aspects of consumer involvement with a product class rather than short-term involvement in a more specific situation, in both situations consumers with high involvement are more engaged than are less involved consumers (Martin et al., 2013). Therefore, we would expect cultural contact to moderate the relationship between tourists' satisfaction and their behavioral intentions (H7).

**H7:** Cultural contact moderates the relationship between tourists' satisfaction and their behavioral intentions.

## Research Method

### *Research Context*

Taiwan is a suitable subject for researchers to study cultural quarters visiting behavior because Taiwan's government made the promotion of cultural and creative industries a top priority in 2002 after observing development of the cultural and

creative industry in the UK and proposals by the United Nations Organization for Education, Science and Culture (UNESCO) (Chang, 2007; M.-H. Chen, Pan, Chang, & Wu, 2012). Central to this initiative was the planning of five cultural and creative parks (Chang, 2007). By the end of 2015, there were 23 cultural and creative parks in Taiwan, and the establishment of such parks has created many opportunities for Taiwan's tourists to visit cultural quarters.

### *Expert Panel*

A list that included Taiwan's 23 cultural quarters was submitted for review by five tourism scholars who are knowledgeable about Taiwan's cultural quarters. The purpose of the current research was explained to these experts. After the experts reviewed the list, we selected four cultural quarters that the experts considered suitable for this research: Dongshin Old Train Station Hakka Culture Park, Liudui Hakka Cultural Park, Miaoli Hakka Cultural Park, and Taiwan Indigenous Culture Park. Similar to the destination included in Gnoth and Zins' (2013) study, these four cultural quarters primarily showcase ethnic minority cultures.

A list that contained Gnoth and Zins' (2013) cultural contact scale items was also submitted to these five scholars for review because the cultural contact scale was designed to examine tourists' involvement in traditional Maori activities. Based on the experts' suggestions, "Maori cooking classes," "Maori carving classes," and "Maori weaving classes" were revised to "I participated in the Hakka's or indigenous people's cooking, carving, and/or weaving classes" to reduce redundancy. In addition, "I participated in traditional activities (e.g., food gathering and preparation)" and "Maori dance performance" were merged into "I participated in the Hakka's or indigenous people's traditional activities (e.g., a dance performance or food gathering and/or preparation)" to reduce redundancy.

### *Sampling and Data Collection*

#### *Methods for the Main Study*

To examine the proposed framework, trained interviewers conducted the data collection. The

interviewers were recruited to gather data from domestic tourists who visited Dongshin Old Train Station Hakka Culture Park, Liudui Hakka Cultural Park, Miaoli Hakka Cultural Park, and Taiwan Indigenous Culture Park. Gnoth and Zins (2009) focused on international tourists. By focusing on Taiwanese domestic tourists, we aimed to increase this variable's applicability and to further examine its influence.

For data collection, we used a nonprobability respondent-driven sampling approach. We used an on-site purposive sampling method to recruit the participants and an interception technique to approach the tourists. For the tourists who agreed to participate in this research, the interviewer explained the purpose of the research and asked a set of screening questions. To qualify for the interview, potential participants needed 1) to be over the age of 18 years, 2) to be residents of Taiwan but not from the county where the cultural quarter they visited was located, and 3) to have tourism as the purpose of their visit. If they passed the screening process, the interviewer conducted the main survey with the respondents. The trained interviewers checked for missing data, debriefed the respondents, and thanked them for their assistance once the survey was returned. During the 9-week data collection period, 1,273 individuals were asked to participate in this research, and we collected a total of 400 usable surveys for a response rate of 31.4%. Table 1 presents the participants' demographic information.

Table 1  
Characteristics of the Participants ( $N = 400$ )

Demographic Traits	
Gender	
Male	47.8%
Female	52.2%
Respondent's age	
18–30 years old	33.2%
31–40 years old	46.8%
41–50 years old	12.2%
51–60 years old	7.8%
Education	
High school degree	12.7%
College degree	11.0%
University	36.0%
Postgraduate degree or above	40.3%

### Questionnaire Design

The participants completed a survey that consisted of two sections. In the first section, participant demographics such as gender and age were collected. The second section consisted of 25 statements about tourists' behavioral intentions, satisfaction, cultural contact, ideal self-congruence, brand identification, and lifestyle congruence. We used 3 items to evaluate satisfaction and behavioral intentions (Jang & Namkung, 2009; Taplin, 2013), 3 items to measure ideal self-congruence, brand identification, and lifestyle congruence (Nam et al., 2011), and 10 items to measure cultural contact (Gnoth & Zins, 2013). These statements were generated from a review of the previous cultural quarter and tourism literature. To maintain consistency, we used a 7-point Likert-type scale in the item design. The items for each variable are presented in Table 2.

### Data Analysis and Results

#### Model Measurement

We used IBM SPSS AMOS 20 to analyze the data and a two-step approach to structural equation modeling (SEM), as recommended by Anderson and Gerbing (1988). All of the factor loadings on the intended latent variables were significant and greater than 0.7 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), and the squared-multiple correlations supported the reliability of the items that were used. Because all of the constructs had composite reliabilities that were greater than the recommended threshold of 0.7 (Hair, Sarstedt, Ringle, & Mena, 2012), construct reliability was supported.

We assessed convergent validity in terms of the factor loadings and average variance extracted (AVE). According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), AVE is the average variance that is shared between a construct and its measurement. As shown in Table 3, the AVE values ranged from 0.73 to 0.91; hence, the convergent validity was confirmed (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Finally, we assessed the discriminant validity by comparing the AVE of each individual construct with the shared variances between each individual construct and all of the other constructs. Because the AVE value for each construct was greater than the squared correlation



Table 2

Descriptive Analysis of the Measures (*N* = 400)

Construct (Adopted From)/Items	Mean ( <i>SD</i> )
Ideal self-congruence (I) (Nam et al., 2011)	
I1: Cultural Quarter X's visitors have an image similar to how I like to see myself.	4.57 (1.06)
I2: The image of Cultural Quarter X is consistent with how I like to see myself.	4.69 (1.09)
I3: The image of Cultural Quarter X is consistent with how I would like others to see me.	4.71 (1.15)
Brand identification (B) (Nam et al., 2011)	
B1: If I talk about Cultural Quarter X, I usually say "we" rather than "they."	4.51 (1.03)
B2: If a story in the media criticizes Cultural Quarter X, I would feel embarrassed.	4.50 (1.00)
B3: When someone criticizes Cultural Quarter X, it feels like a personal insult.	4.54 (1.00)
Lifestyle congruence (LC) (Nam et al., 2011)	
LC1: Cultural Quarter X reflects my personal lifestyle.	4.62 (1.07)
LC2: Cultural Quarter X is totally in line with my lifestyle.	4.66 (1.17)
LC3: Supporting Cultural Quarter X supports my lifestyle.	4.90 (1.27)
Satisfaction (S) (Taplin, 2013)	
S1: I was satisfied with this visit to Cultural Quarter X.	4.74 (1.22)
S2: My expectations for this visit today were exceeded.	5.02 (1.32)
S3: I am pleased with this visit to Cultural Quarter X.	5.15 (1.36)
Loyalty (L) (Taplin, 2013)	
L1: I would like to come back to Cultural Quarter X in the future.	5.23 (1.38)
L2: I plan to revisit this cultural quarter in the future.	4.66 (1.07)
L3: I would recommend this cultural quarter to my friends or others.	5.09 (1.33)
Cultural contact (C) (Gnoth & Zins, 2013)	
C1: I learned about the history of Hakka's or indigenous people.	5.17 (1.28)
C2: I learned about the early settlers in the area.	5.28 (1.37)
C3: I participated in Hakka's or indigenous people's traditional activities (e.g., dance performance, food gathering and/or preparation).	5.30 (1.35)
C4: I learned about Hakka's or indigenous people's stories and history.	5.35 (1.31)
C5: I learned Hakka's or indigenous people's language.	5.36 (1.47)
C6: I tried traditional Hakka's or indigenous people's food.	5.44 (1.49)
C7: I participated in Hakka's or indigenous people's cooking, carving, and/or weaving classes.	5.32 (1.34)
C8: I visited a Hakka's or indigenous people's craft shop or gallery.	5.27 (1.24)

Note. In the survey, "Cultural Quarter X" is replaced to the cultural quarter visited by the respondents.

between constructs, the discriminant validity was confirmed.

We tested for common method variance using a common latent factor (CLF) method (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Jeong-Yeon, & Podsakoff, 2003). For this

test, a latent variable was added to the CFA model of this research and was then connected to all the observed items in the model. The standardized regression weights of the new model were then compared with those of the original model (Mulki

Table 3

Correlation Between Constructs Following CFA

	CrA	CR	AVE	I	B	LC	S	L	C	S×C
I	0.87	0.92	0.79	<b>0.89</b>						
B	0.82	0.89	0.74	0.74	<b>0.86</b>					
LC	0.91	0.94	0.85	0.74	0.74	<b>0.92</b>				
S	0.94	0.96	0.90	0.81	0.78	0.84	<b>0.95</b>			
L	0.90	0.94	0.83	0.77	0.70	0.79	0.85	<b>0.91</b>		
C	0.98	0.98	0.88	0.73	0.67	0.81	0.89	0.86	<b>0.94</b>	
S×C		0.99	0.91	-0.73	-0.50	-0.65	-0.73	-0.64	-0.82	<b>0.95</b>

Note. CrA = Cronach's alpha; CR = composite reliability; AVE = average variance extracted. I = Ideal self-congruence; B = Brand identification; LC = Lifestyle congruence; S = Satisfaction; L = Loyalty; C = Cultural contact. Bold numbers on the diagonal are square root of each construct's AVE value.

& Wilkinson, 2017). The comparison showed that the results were similar between the two models, supporting the assumption that common method bias was not a significant issue for this research (Mulki & Wilkinson, 2017).

### Structural Model

Having found the overall measurement model to be acceptable, we tested the structural model. The model fit was good ( $\chi^2/df = 3.42$ ; RMSEA = 0.08; CFI = 0.96; NFI = 0.94). The results obtained from examining the proposed hypotheses are presented in Table 4. H1 was supported ( $\beta = 0.27$ ;  $t = 4.05$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ); therefore, ideal self-congruence had a positive impact on tourists' satisfaction. In H2, we suggested that brand identification would have a positive influence on tourists' satisfaction. The results ( $\beta = 0.23$ ;  $t = 2.71$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) demonstrate that this relationship is positive and significant. H3 was supported because lifestyle congruence was revealed to have a significantly positive impact on tourists' satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.12$ ;  $t = 1.96$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Hypothesis H4 ( $\beta = 0.69$ ;  $t = 7.26$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) was also supported by the results, and therefore we confirmed that tourists' satisfaction positively influenced tourists' behavioral intentions. H5 was supported ( $\beta = 0.39$ ;  $t = 11.2$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ): cultural contact had a positive impact on tourists' satisfaction. In H6, it was suggested that cultural contact would have a positive influence on tourists' behavioral intentions, and it was revealed by the results

( $\beta = 0.53$ ;  $t = 6.17$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ) that this relationship is positive and significant.

In H7, we proposed that cultural contact would moderate the relationship between satisfaction and behavioral intentions. To examine this hypothesis, we created an interactive term to serve as a latent construct with items that were the product terms of the satisfaction and cultural contact items. In the structural model, cultural contact and its interaction with satisfaction were significantly related to behavioral intentions ( $\beta = 0.06$ ;  $t = 2.94$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). In the path model, cultural contact also had a moderating effect ( $\beta = 2.15$ ;  $t = 2.03$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ); therefore, we conclude that cultural contact did moderate the relationship between satisfaction and behavioral intentions (Table 4 and Fig. 2).

### Satisfaction's Mediating Effect

Preacher and Hayes's (2008) guidelines were used to examine the mediating effect of satisfaction. First, examining the results, ideal self-congruence, brand identification, and lifestyle congruence were directly associated with behavioral intentions. Ideal self-congruence, brand identification, and lifestyle congruence were also shown to be positively related to satisfaction. Finally, it is indicated by the results that the mediator, satisfaction, was positively associated with behavioral intentions.

Because the a-paths (ideal self-congruence  $\rightarrow$  satisfaction; brand identification  $\rightarrow$  satisfaction; and lifestyle congruence  $\rightarrow$  satisfaction) and b-paths (satisfaction  $\rightarrow$  behavioral intentions) were significant, we tested the mediation analyses using the bootstrapping method with bias-corrected confidence estimates (MacKinnon, Lockwood, & Williams, 2004). In the present study, a 95% confidence interval for the indirect effects was obtained with 5,000 bootstrap resamples (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). The results of the mediation analysis confirmed the mediating role of satisfaction on the relationships between the symbolic consumption variables (i.e., ideal self-congruence, brand identification, and lifestyle congruence) and behavioral intentions. Moreover, the direct effect of brand identification on behavioral intentions changed to nonsignificant when controlling for satisfaction, which suggested full mediation. The direct effects of ideal self-congruence on behavioral intentions

Table 4  
Hypotheses Tests ( $N = 400$ )

Path	Full-model	Results
H1: I $\rightarrow$ S	0.20(3.26)**	Support
H2: B $\rightarrow$ S	0.18(3.21)**	Support
H3: LC $\rightarrow$ S	0.16(2.13)*	Support
H4: S $\rightarrow$ L	0.38(3.83)***	Support
H5: C $\rightarrow$ S	0.39(5.57)***	Support
H6: C $\rightarrow$ L	0.51(4.25)***	Support
H7: S $\rightarrow$ L	H = 0.46(4.96)***	Support
	L = 0.26(1.34)	

Note. I = Ideal self-congruence; B = Brand identification; LC = Lifestyle congruence; S = Satisfaction; L = Loyalty; C = Cultural contact; H = High cultural contact group; L = Low cultural contact group.

\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ .

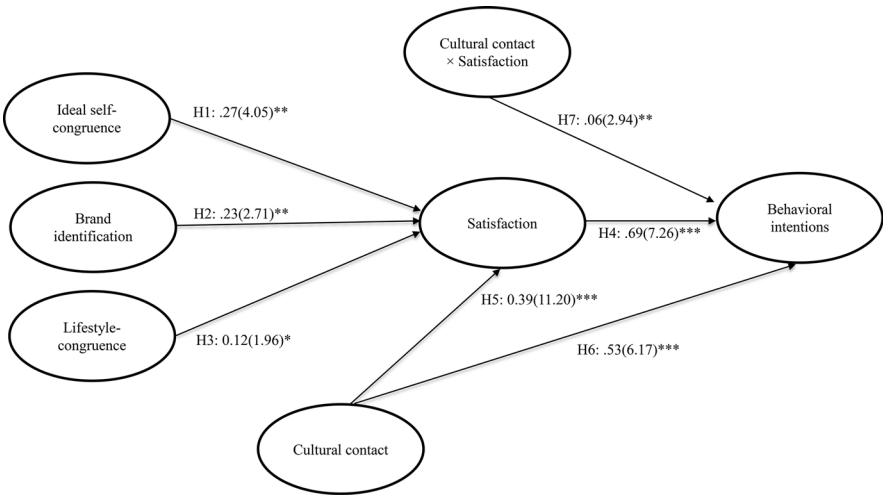


Figure 2. Results from hypotheses testing.

and of lifestyle congruence on behavioral intentions remained significant when controlling for satisfaction, which suggested partial mediation. Table 5 summarizes the statistics regarding the indirect and direct relationships that are essential for examining the mediating effects.

Measuring Local Effect Size

In addition to the statistical significance of the coefficients in the structural equation model, we report the relevant effect size, a measure of practical significance, using Cohen’s  $f^2$  test. The  $F$ -statistic estimates the proportion of variance accounted for by the predictor relative to the observed variable and can provide additional insight into the findings while avoiding Type 1 errors (Khalilzadeh & Tasci, 2017).

In this study, we examine the local effect size by following Khalilzadeh and Tasci’s (2017) steps. Khalilzadeh and Tasci (2017) suggested that 0.01, 0.06, and 0.14 be used as the cutoff points for defining a small effect, medium effect, and large effect, respectively. The  $R^2$  for the observed variable in this research (behavioral intentions) is 0.88. The  $R^2$  value for the “behavioral intentions” variable considering only the influence of satisfaction is 0.845. The local effect size is 0.29, which suggests a large effect size. In other words, the effect of cultural contact on tourists’ intentions to revisit and to recommend a cultural quarter is apparent. This result aligns with the outcomes of the

unstandardized betas, indicating that the influence of satisfaction on tourists’ behavioral intentions is more apparent than that of cultural contact.

The  $R^2$  for satisfaction is 0.94. The local effect size for ideal self-congruence, lifestyle congruence, brand identification, and cultural contact is 0.22 (large effect), 0.03 (small effect), 0.12 (medium effect), and 0.08 (medium effect), respectively. The interpretation is that the effect of ideal self-congruence on satisfaction is apparent, lifestyle congruence’s influence on satisfaction is subtle, and cultural contact’s and brand identification’s impacts on satisfaction are mediocre. Lifestyle congruence and brand identification have effect sizes that are consistent with their unstandardized betas. However, ideal self-congruence and cultural contact appear to have greater effect on satisfaction than is indicated by their betas.

Discussion

We extend self-congruity theory four ways in this study. First, the inclusion of a “cultural contact” variable into the proposed model has improved the model’s ability to explain cultural quarter visitors’ satisfaction and behavioral intentions. Second, it is revealed in the findings of this study that the relationship between satisfaction and behavioral intentions is moderated by cultural contact. Third, based on the findings of this research, we confirm that contact with cultural activities could have a

Table 5  
Summary of Mediation Results for Satisfaction

Independent Variable (IV)	Mediating Variable (M)	Dependent Variable (DV)	Total Effect (c)	Effect of IV on M (a)	Effect of M on DV (b)	Direct Effect (c)	Point Estimate (95% CI for Mean Indirect Effect)	Result
Ideal self-congruence	Satisfaction	Loyalty	0.94***	1.03***	0.64***	0.29**	0.66 (0.57, 0.77)	Partial mediation
Brand identification			0.95***	1.09***	0.75***	0.13	0.81 (0.71, 0.93)	Full mediation
Lifestyle congruence			0.87***	0.96***	0.63***	0.26***	0.61 (0.52, 0.71)	Partial mediation

\*\*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ .

direct impact on tourists' satisfaction and behavioral intentions. Fourth, based on the results, we suggest that consumers' identification with a tourism destination brand is not only influenced by the congruity between their ideal self-image and the brand's image but also by the strength of their brand identification and lifestyle congruence.

### *Theoretical Implications*

Based on the results of the analysis, four issues warrant further discussion. First, tourists' involvement with on-site activities, such as the degree of contact that they have with different cultural activities, need to be considered when the tourism destination is characterized by a high level of cultural activities. This study is unique in capturing such a moderating effect and unites satisfaction, cultural contact, and behavioral intentions. Given the significance of a cultural quarter to its host city and its image, we further contribute to the literature in the field with this finding and pave the way for future researchers to investigate other potential moderating effects on tourists' intentions to revisit and to recommend cultural destinations.

Second, one of the main contributions that we make with this research to the cultural tourism literature is our examination of cultural contact's effect on tourists. The tourism literature has yet to empirically examine cultural contact's moderating effect on this relationship. In addition, the existing consumer literature on involvement's ability to moderate the effects of satisfaction and behavioral intentions mainly focuses on long-term, enduring involvement with a product class (e.g., Lim, 2014; Lin, Fan, & Chau, 2014) rather than on short-term involvement, which is more situation dependent. Because cultural contact's moderating effect has not been empirically examined by previous scholars, there is no point for comparison at this stage. However, we demonstrate by this study's findings that short-term involvement is a factor that has a significant effect on tourists' consumption of destination brands.

When tourists have more opportunities to become involved in the cultural activities that are offered by a cultural quarter, their satisfaction with the cultural quarter will have a greater impact on their commitment to recommend the destination to

others and to revisit. In the current study, we also found that cultural contact could directly influence satisfaction and behavioral intentions and demonstrated that contact with cultural activities has a significant impact on a cultural destination's tourists. In addition, these outcomes reconfirmed the importance of getting visitors involved with the activities provided by tourism operators (T. H. Lee & Chang, 2012; Martin et al., 2013). Because in this research we focused on multiple cultural quarters, the scale of the application and generalizability of cultural contact has been broadened.

The findings regarding the influence of cultural contact are novel, but they are also sensible when considered in the context of the development and impact of the sharing economy. In the sharing economy era, which relies on many Web 2.0 technologies, consumers are used to and are more willing to participate in content creation, as these technologies encourage users to create their own content (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2002; Lu, Zhao, & Wang, 2010). Therefore, it is not surprising that these consumers prefer hands-on experiences when participating in tourism activities.

Third, based on the results obtained in this study, we revealed that the application of symbolic consumption from the tourism destination brands model to cultural destinations is appropriate because symbolic consumption variables can affect the level of satisfaction that tourists derive from cultural quarters. When examining destination brands from tourists' perspectives, brand identification and lifestyle congruence should be considered together with self-congruity.

Previous results on the influence of lifestyle congruence have been inconsistent. With the findings obtained in this study, we provide additional confirmation that tourists find satisfaction in destinations that can help them build a good reputation within their existing or aspirational social groups and that satisfy their need to maintain or achieve a particular lifestyle. In addition, cultural quarters can reflect a unique lifestyle. Tourists will be more satisfied with their decision to visit if they find that the destination they visited aligns with their lifestyle or brings them closer to the lifestyle they aspire to. Comparing this study's results with the findings of previous research (e.g., Ahn et al., 2013; Ekinci et al., 2013; Hosany & Martin, 2012) reconfirms

the influence of ideal self-congruence and brand identification on tourists' satisfaction. For lifestyle congruence, this study's results align with the findings of Ekinci et al. (2013) and Nam et al. (2011).

Another contribution of this research is related to the mediating effect of satisfaction. As we demonstrate in the current study, satisfaction fully mediates the relationship between brand identification and behavioral intentions. Because the results concerning satisfaction's mediating effect remain inconsistent, researchers may need to be cautious about removing satisfaction from symbolic consumption in the tourism destination brands model.

### *Practical Implications*

To promote a deeply held commitment to revisit and recommend a cultural quarter among tourists, practitioners should focus on increasing opportunities for cultural contact during visits. We have demonstrated that this factor has a direct influence on tourists' behavioral intentions and that cultural contact can reinforce the influence of satisfaction on behavioral intentions. Promoters of cultural quarters may want to collaborate with creative workers within a quarter to increase the number of on-site cultural activities that tourists can directly participate in, such as cooking signature dishes and attending interactive seminar sessions.

To increase tourists' intentions to revisit and to recommend, practitioners should work to increase visitors' satisfaction. To achieve this objective, practitioners may first need to identify a cultural quarter's perceived image, brand identity, and lifestyle through market research and a review of its mission statement. Once they have identified the perceived image, brand identity, and lifestyle of a cultural quarter, practitioners can then search for visitors who are more likely to respond favorably to that quarter. For instance, the promoters of Dongshin Old Train Station Hakka Culture Park may be able to obtain data regarding individuals who are interested in the Hakka way of life through the Hakka Affairs Council.

Once a cultural quarter's symbolic meanings have been identified and the profiles of potential visitors have been confirmed, a cultural quarter's marketing team can consider how to tailor its message to different target audiences. One potentially useful message is to emphasize how a cultural quarter's



image, brand identity, and lifestyle can sustain and enhance tourists' self-image, social identity, and lifestyle. For instance, in the process of communicating with tourists who are indigenous people or who are family members of indigenous people, the marketing message for the Taiwan Indigenous Culture Park could emphasize how visitors can learn more about themselves and the traditional lifestyle of their people. Another potentially effective message is to emphasize the aspirational aspect of a cultural quarter's image, brand, and lifestyle to visitors. For example, East London's message to tourists who desire a Bohemian lifestyle might be to underscore how a visit to East London can bring tourists closer to that lifestyle.

### Conclusions

By incorporating cultural contact into symbolic consumption in the tourism destination brands model, we have examined tourists' consumption of destinations that contain high levels of cultural activities. Although we contribute to the cultural tourism literature and cultural tourism practices with this research, it has two limitations. First, we did not include international tourists in this study; only Taiwanese residents who were domestic tourists were included. Previous studies have shown that tourists from afar tend to be less knowledgeable but more interested in cultural destinations than tourists from neighboring regions (Gnoth & Zins, 2013). Scholars could compare the influences of symbolic consumption variables and cultural contact through application of the current research model to domestic and international tourists. Second, this research did not include actual self-congruence in its model. Ekinci et al. (2008) and Hosany and Martin (2012) have suggested that actual self-congruence is less influential than ideal self-congruence in the context of tourism; however, additional research can be performed to further examine this factor's influence and to explore why actual self-congruence might not have a significant impact on tourist satisfaction.

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